

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CBD



What is CBD?

CBD (Cannabidiol) is one of hundreds of naturally occurring cannabinoids found in the cannabis sativa plant from which hemp and marijuana are derived.¹ Though CBD is found in marijuana, it is not intoxicating.¹ There are many unanswered questions about the science, safety, and quality of products containing CBD.

Not Approved by Food and Drug Administration [FDA] & Unsubstantiated Health Claims

There is no evidence confirming the many health claims of CBD. The FDA has not approved any CBD products except for one prescription drug, Epidiolex, to treat rare, severe forms of seizure disorders in children.² Other than Epidiolex, CBD products have not been evaluated or approved by FDA for use as drug products. This means that we do not know:

- If they are safe and effective to treat a particular disease
- What, if any, dosage may be considered safe
- How they could interact with other drugs or foods
- Whether they have dangerous side effects or other safety concerns²



Serious Side Effects

The clinical studies that supported the approval of the one available CBD drug product identified risks related to the use of CBD, including liver toxicity (damage), extreme sleepiness, and harmful interactions with other drugs.² These are serious risks that can be managed when an FDA-approved CBD drug product is taken under medical supervision, but it is less clear how these risks might be managed when CBD is used far more widely, without medical supervision and not in accordance with FDA-approved labeling.²

Product Contamination

CBD products purchased in head shops, dispensaries, health stores, etc. are not regulated or approved by the FDA. Thus, there is a potential for CBD products to be contaminated with THC, the psychoactive compound in marijuana, and other harmful substances. There are reports of CBD potentially containing other contaminants (e.g., pesticides, heavy metals, bacteria, and fungus).² The FDA has issued several warning letters to firms that market unapproved new drugs that allegedly contain cannabidiol (CBD). As part of these actions, FDA has tested the chemical content of cannabinoid³ compounds in some of the products, and many were found to not contain the levels of CBD they claimed to contain.

FDA Against Use During Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

FDA strongly advises against the use of cannabidiol (CBD) in any form during pregnancy or while breastfeeding.² Whether, and to what extent, the presence of CBD in human milk harms the breastfed baby or the mother's milk production is unknown.² Contaminants in unregulated products may pose a risk to the fetus or breastfed baby.

1. Expert Committee on Drug Dependence. Cannabidiol [Internet]. Geneva; 2017. Available from: https://www.who.int/medicines/access/controlled-substances/5.2_CBD.pdf

2. US Food and Drug Administration. What You Should Know About Using Cannabis, Including CBD, When Pregnant or Breastfeeding [Internet]. 2019. Available from: <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/what-you-should-know-about-using-cannabis-including-cbd-when-pregnant-or-breastfeeding>

3. US Food and Drug Administration. Warning Letters and Test Results for Cannabidiol-Related Products [Internet]. 2019. Available from: <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/public-health-focus/warning-letters-and-test-results-cannabidiol-related-products>